

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, are we safer now than we were 4 years ago? We have spent billions and 1,000 of our best have died in Iraq. But spending blood and treasure without wisdom will not necessarily make us safer. And while we have as a unified Nation dealt with al Qaeda and Afghanistan, we have ignored the nuclear weapons programs of Iran and North Korea. Our policy toward those two greatest threats has been "hear no evil, see no evil."

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The administration's idea on how to make us safe from those nuclear weapons as to North Korea is to beg and as to Iran is to beg the Europeans to beg on our behalf.

The Bush administration refuses to use economic sanctions on Iran and those who subsidize North Korea because they do not want to inconvenience corporate America. Our invasion of Iraq is as if in the wake of Pearl Harbor we invaded Fascist Spain while ignoring Imperial Japan and Nazi Germany.

VICE PRESIDENT CHENEY'S SCARE TACTICS

(Mr. MEEKS of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to denounce Vice President CHENEY's disgusting and inappropriate remarks yesterday while campaigning. The Vice President's consistent attacks have reached an all-time low, even for him, and that is saying a lot for the most polarizing, divisive Vice President in the history of the United States.

We were not attacked because we were Democrats. We were not attacked because we were Republicans. We were attacked because we were Americans, and the question is where is this administration leading us? Mr. CHENEY criticizes Mr. KERRY while he was defending this country, and he took five deferments.

To exploit 9/11 and play on the public fears of terrorism is an affirmation by this administration that their record is too dismal to stand on its own. Americans should be fearful, fearful of the Bush-Cheney policies that have recruited more terrorists who want to destroy us, fearful that the hatred for America is at an all-time high, thanks to the policies of Bush-Cheney.

Time and time again this administration has made the wrong choices for America. JOHN KERRY and JOHN EDWARDS will take America in a new direction. He will make America stronger at home and more respected around the world.

VICE PRESIDENT CHENEY REACHED A NEW LOW

(Mr. MCGOVERN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, yesterday Vice President CHENEY reached a new low. The Vice President has a history of saying outrageous things, but yesterday takes the cake.

I hope everyone realizes what the Vice President is up to. He is desperately trying to change the subject from the tragic milestone of 1,000 American fatalities in Iraq.

Today we mourn with the families who have lost their loved ones.

He can try to change the subject, Mr. Speaker, but he cannot change the fact that over and over and over again this administration has made the wrong choices in Iraq. Here we are, no weapons of mass destruction, 1,000 American fatalities, thousands and thousands of wounded and \$200 billion later.

Imagine what we could have done with \$200 billion. We could have invested that in jobs, in health care, in education and veterans programs, and in ensuring that our military is the best-equipped, best-trained and best-housed in the world. Those should be our priorities, Mr. Speaker, and it is sad that after 4 years in office, DICK CHENEY still does not get it.

OUTRAGE OVER INCREASE IN MEDICARE PART B PREMIUMS

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I just want to reiterate again my sense of outrage over this 17 percent increase in Medicare Part B premiums, which is basically \$11 a month for America's seniors that is soon to go into effect.

President Bush said, well, this is because health care costs have gone up, but what he does not say is it is actually the result of Republican policies. The Republicans passed their so-called Medicare prescription drug bill, which we know is a sham, does not even go into effect until the year 2006, but what that bill did was to give a lot more money to insurers, and, as a result, the cost of Medicare premiums are going up.

The fact of the matter is that this 17 percent increase that is unaffordable for many seniors is a direct result of Republican policy and the Bush administration's policy, and it has to stop.

We need a change of administration. We need a President, JOHN KERRY, who is going to worry about senior citizens, address their needs, address the rising costs of health care, address the Medicare concerns, provide a true prescription drug benefit.

This premium increase is just an indication of what we would see over the next 2-years if the Republicans continue in power in this House. It has got to stop. Seniors should wake up and see the result of the Bush policies and what it means for their Medicare program.

LOSS OF SOLDIERS' LIVES

(Ms. SLAUGHTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to discuss the issue of having lost 1,000 of our soldiers. How heart-breaking this is when we look at the ages and the numbers of those young people, many of them barely 19 years old, whose dreams for their lives and hopes for their future are gone, and our hearts break for them and for their families.

One statistic that we have not heard much about, and frankly I think have not been given the truth about, are the number of those who have been wounded and maimed. Again, 18, 19, 20, 21 years old.

We are told that the casualty statistics of people wounded amounts to 7,000, but we found out last week in my office, because I was curious about that number, that the Pentagon has sent home over 15,800. These are young people coming back to the United States whose lives are changed forever, many of them amputees. Many of them lost their eyesight, many of them again changed and future gone, coming back to an America where the Veterans Administration has been so decimated by the Bush administration that they will have to wait 6 or 8 months even to see a doctor at the VA.

The resources, the health care that they need, that they counted on and that we made a contract with them is not there. What a sad commentary on this country, with its wealth and its riches and where people go on living their lives, that we would allow our young people and a large part of our future to be maimed and to be killed for a war with no end.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5006, DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, AND EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2005

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 754 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 754

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 5006) making appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2005, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations. After general debate the bill shall be